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A JOURNAL OF POETRY AND OPINION

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Dear Hal,

Terribly sorry, my friend, to be so slow in replying to yours of 28 January. I've been trying to find some way to help you avoid the "clinic" arrangement, with regard to medical examination, that you described to me some time ago. A telephone call recently from a friend now living in Chicago has finally brought something home to me. He described trying to see a doctor. He has no "family physician" in the area, of course, and so it seemed practical to visit one of the "clinics." Well, it is rather like an assembly line, apparently: hurry up and present your main complaint because I only have six minutes to spend with you before my next patient.

Well, I understand some of the reasons such non-human places have been allowed to come into being and why they have been tolerated—especially in the very big cities...even if I do not agree that they are the only answer. But in your case I think you should stay completely away from them. I asked, I think, about your seeing a private physician—one who had the time to see you properly—but I don't think you ever answered me on this point. So I bring it up again—because I think it is vitally important for you to make every effort to do this.

I understand your frustration and am sure you are justified in lodging a protest with the medical coop, even going to see the director. But similar cases I am familiar with have convinced me you would probably be wasting your time. Unjust? Hell, yes—but the essential thing right now is to get yourself adequately taken care of. The episodes of blacking out are not trifles, Hal, whatever their cause. You need to see someone, preferably a neurologist, and have time enough to describe to him in detail what these spells are like. You need to see someone who can and will give you a very thorough neurologic examination. And you need to do it now. It will be expensive, very likely, and the guy who does it may very well be an arrogant bastard—though I certainly hope not. In any case, do it. Who do you know who might be able to refer you to a physician they themselves have some confidence in? Arrange to go to NYC if necessary.

Now listen to me: I want you to call me, collect, after you've thought over what I've just told you. Jean and I have a diagnostician here in whom we have utterly complete confidence. (Yes, a rare soul!) It is just possible he may be able to make a referral himself. He may well have a contact of a professional type in your area. And we know he will help if he can. Nowthen. If it should develop that this type of referral is not practical—then we want you to seriously consider coming here, to Omaha, to see our physician or a neurologist recommended by him. The appointment can be set up from our end with a minimum of fuss, and you can stay with us while you're here. OK? I'll expect your call, say Monday or Tuesday evening, no matter what you decide or what arrange-

ments you may have made there in the meantime. We are completely serious about this, Hal. The problem has gone on too long already without professional attention.

Let us hear from you—

Herl

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